

10-Point OSHA Silica Dust Compliance Checklist

The new silica standard establishes a Permissible Exposure Limit (PEL) of 50 µg/m³ over an 8-hour time-weighted average. Meaning over an 8-hour work shift, workers may be exposed to no more than 50 micrograms of respirable crystalline silica.

The new standard has several requirements that employers must meet in order to ensure full compliance. The following list is intended to be a helpful guide, but is not a substitute for the official standards in the OSHA Crystalline Silica Standard 29 CFR 1926.1153.

1 Review Table 1 of the Standard and follow the dust control methods provided.

2 Create a written exposure control plan.
Your plan must include a description of the following:

- The workplace tasks involving exposures to respirable crystalline silica
- The engineering controls, work practices, and respiratory protection used to limit employee exposure to respirable crystalline silica for each task
- The housekeeping methods used to limit employee exposure to respirable crystalline silica
- The procedures used to restrict access to work areas, when necessary, to limit the number of employees exposed to respirable crystalline silica

You can write up your own plan or visit <https://plan.silica-safe.org> and use the free tool provided.

3 Designate a “competent person” who is trained on the silica standard, can identify existing hazards, and is authorized to eliminate or minimized hazards.

4 Use proper housekeeping procedures for cleaning work areas.
No dry sweeping or using an air compressor to blow away dust. Only wet sweeping or HEPA-filtered vacuuming is permitted.

5 Determine areas where employees may be exposed to silica dust and post warning signs or erect barriers to entry, if feasible.

6 Identify and provide proper respiratory protection as prescribed in Table 1 of the standard for any affected employee; this includes both employees who are operating equipment and employees who are present in the work area and may be at risk for dust exposure.

7 Provide OSHA-compliant medical surveillance to all employees covered by the standard.

8 Train and inform all employees covered by the silica standard about respirable crystalline silica hazards, the workplace tasks that put them at risk for exposure, and specific measures that are being implemented to protect employees.

Training must be provided at the time an employee is assigned to a position involving exposure to respirable crystalline silica.

9 Make a copy of the OSHA crystalline standard available at no cost to each employee covered by the standard (this could simply involve allowing employees to view a printed or electronic copy in a reasonable location).

10 Keep thorough records of air monitoring data (if applicable), medical surveillance records, a copy of Table 1, and your written exposure plan.

OSHA requires that records be kept for at least the duration of employment plus 30 years.

Feeling overwhelmed?

Find more information, helpful videos, and free resources at www.jondon.com/silica.